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FILE No. **NA** L 3/359/1 (Part     )

TITLE: POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND  
ARAB REPUBLIC OF LIBYA ✓

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FILE No. **NA** L 3/359/1 PART

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British Embassy in Libya,  
Tripoli.

15 January, 1970.

3/6

Dear Ibbott,

Libya/Iraq Relations

Sayyid Abdullah Saloum al-Samara'i, the Minister of State for Information and a member of the Revolutionary Command Council in Iraq, visited Libya from 5 - 6 January.

2. Samara'i's visit, which was billed publicly as being undertaken in pursuit of agreement on a unified Arab information policy "in the wake of the failure of the recent Arab summit", was expected by the Press to last several days. In the event, he left after less than 24 hours. When the Ambassador enquired of his Iraqi colleague about the visit, Sd. Talib explained that Samara'i had come to discuss with the Libyans the possibility of mounting a propaganda attack on Saudi Arabia and other Arab "reactionaires" and had cut short his visit when it became apparent that the Libyans did not favour the idea.

3. It is not surprising that the Libyans baulked at the Iraqi suggestion. Apart from some off-the-cuff remarks by Qadafi on his return from Rabat, the Libyans have been scrupulously courteous in public references to other Arab states, whatever their political complexion. Their restraint on the present occasion may also reflect advice given to them by President Nasser who, as you know, indicated to Mr. George Brown recently, that he badly needed the Saudi subvention.

*Yours ever,*  
*David Gore Booth*  
(D.A. Gore-Booth)

A. Ibbott, Esq.,  
NAD, ECO.

c.c. Chanceries:-  
Baghdad, Cairo, Benghazi, Jedda.

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*P. 130. 139.*

*P. 130.*

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ROUTINE TRIPOLI

TELEGRAM NUMBER 703

TO FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

24 APRIL 1970

UNCLASSIFIED

ADDRESSED TO FCO TELEGRAM NO. 703 OF 24 APRIL RFI TO CAIRO,  
BAGHDAD, KHARTOUM, TEHERAN AND SAVING TO BENGHAZI.

LIBYA/IRAQ RELATIONS.

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL LIBYAN NEWS AGENCY, COLONEL QADAFI, CHAIRMAN OF THE LIBYAN REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL, SUMMONED MY IRAQI COLLEAGUE ON 22 APRIL TO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE PRESENT STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN. THE LNA REPORTS THAT HE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO CONVEY TO THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE THE MESSAGE THAT QUOTE THE LIBYAN ARMED FORCES AND PEOPLE ARE ON THE ALERT TO SUPPORT THE BROTHERLY COUNTRY OF IRAQ AND TO FOIL COLONIALIST PLOTS AGAINST PROGRESSIVE ARAB FORCES UNQUOTE.

MR. MAITLAND

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BRITISH EMBASSY IN LIBYA,  
TRIPOLI.

14 May, 1970.

(3/6)

Dear Blott,

Libya/Iraq Relations

Lt. General Salih Mahdi Ammash, Vice-President of Iraq, paid a two day visit to Libya from 29 April to 1 May and made a brief stopover at Tripoli Airport on 5 May on his way back from Algiers.

2. The official Libyan News Agency was typically anodyne and unforthcoming about the purpose of General Ammash's third visit to Libya since the revolution, which was described as being "to discuss bilateral relations and other matters of interest to the two countries". The Ambassador has heard from his Turkish colleague, however, that the real purpose of Ammash's visit was to press President Ahmed Hassan al Bakr's invitation to Colonel Qadafi to visit Iraq, which has been outstanding since the second of Ammash's visits in November, 1969. The Iraqi Ambassador has subsequently called on Colonel Qadafi and he may well have proposed exact dates for a visit.

3. The Kuwait Charge d'Affaires told the Ambassador some days ago that Colonel Qadafi was planning to visit Syria and Lebanon after the completion of the American withdrawal from Wheelus. Certainly the Iraqis would feel put out if he failed to go on to Baghdad, particularly since, we are told, they wish to enlist Colonel Qadafi's support to persuade the Syrians to withdraw their refusal to allow them to station their aircraft on Syrian airfields.

Yours ever  
David Gore-Booth  
(D.A. Gore-Booth)

See also 14

B 19/5  
NBD  
2/6

A. Ibbott, Esq.,  
N.A.D.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

c.c. Chanceries

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EN CLAIR

ROUTINE TRIPOLI

TO FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 800

17 MAY 1970

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ADDRESSED TO FCO TELEGRAM NO. 800 OF 17/5 RFI ROUTINE TO  
CAIRO, BAGHDAD, BEIRUT, AMMAN, ADEN, KHARTOUM AND SAVING TO  
BENGHAZI.

③ GORE-BOOTH'S LETTER 3/6 OF 14 MAY TO IBBOTT:

COLONEL QADAFI'S TRAVEL PLANS.

SPEAKING AT A RALLY TO MARK THE 22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
"USURPATION OF PALESTINE" ON 15 MAY, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE  
LIBYAN R.C.C., COLONEL QADAFI, ANNOUNCED THAT FOLLOWING THE  
TRIPARTITE SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM (DUE TO BEGIN ON 25 MAY) HE WOULD  
VISIT "IRAQ, SYRIA AND PERHAPS LEBANON, JORDAN AND THE ARAB  
PENINSULA".

MR. MAITLAND

FILES:

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CYPHER CAT. A  
PRIORITY BAGHDAD  
TELEGRAM NO. 411

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RECEIVED TO FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE  
REGISTRY No 53 JUNE, 1970.

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8 JUN 1970

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ADDRESSED TO F.C.O. TELEGRAM NO. 411 OF 5 JUNE REPEATED FOR  
INFORMATION TO CAIRO, TRIPOLI; JEDDA, BEIRUT, AMMAN AND  
KHARTOUM.

PRESIDENT QADDAFI, WHO ARRIVED IN BAGHDAD ON 30 MAY  
AFTER TWO FALSE ALARMS, LEFT FINALLY FOR DAMASCUS ON 4 JUNE.  
TWO OF THESE FIVE DAYS WERE SPENT (AS FAR AS THE JORDANIAN  
AMBASSADOR KNOWS, WITHOUT WARNING AND PERHAPS AT IRAQI INITIATIVE)  
VISITING IRAQI TROOPS IN JORDAN, KING HUSSAIN AND JORDANIAN  
TROOPS IN THAT ORDER. ONE DAY WAS SPENT AT BASRA.  
JUDGING BY HIS MOVEMENTS AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES  
HERE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHEN, IF AT ALL, HE HELD SERIOUS  
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IRAQI AUTHORITIES ABOUT HIS ALLEGED  
PLAN, OF WHICH EVEN FEWER INDICATIONS WERE REVEALED DURING  
HIS VISIT THAN APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE CASE IN KHARTOUM  
NA2/1 (KHARTOUM TELEGRAM NO. 331 TO FCO). NO JOINT COMMUNIQUE HAS  
YET BEEN PUBLISHED, THOUGH TODAY'S PRESS STATES THAT ONE WILL  
BE "ISSUED SUBSEQUENTLY".

3. REPORT FOLLOWS BY BAG.

F.C.O. PLEASE PASS ROUTINE TO KHARTOUM.

MR. BALFOUR PAUL

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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BAGHDAD

6 June 1970

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RECEIVED IN  
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15 JUN 1970

NAL 3/359/1

Dear Peter,

Visit of the Libyan Head of State

⑤

President Qaddafi, as reported in my telegram No. 411, has just spent five days as a guest of the Iraq Government. As a visit by a Head of State it left, organisationally, something to be desired. Indeed, in its externals it carried a distinct flavour of Opera Bouffe. It would of course be wrong to deduce from its organisational shortcomings that the visit was of little significance; but we have nothing but the externals to go on.

2. On 27 May invitations were issued to attend his ceremonial arrival the following day. We all stood to accordingly on 28 May and troops lined the Airport approach. At 6 p.m. we were stood down. The following morning he was declared at 1030 to be arriving at 1130 and we all paraded, from the President downwards, at the Airport, the Libyan Charge crashing his car into a petrol tanker in his anxiety to be there on time. At 1130 we were told to go away and come back again at 1400. By now scepticism was mounting and the popular rally (which the French language newspaper of that morning quaintly reported to have given Qaddafi a tumultuous welcome the day before) melted visibly away. (It had never exceeded a few hundred.) But arrive he eventually did; due ceremonial was endured on the scorching tarmac and one and all dispersed to prepare for the first of three mammoth dinners in his honour. At the latter he was invested with the Rafidain Order and made a short, shy speech of which not even those standing close beside him caught a word. Perhaps, people have suggested, this very junior revolutionary was overcome by the generation gap between himself and the ageing revolutionary officers of 50-plus who hemmed him in until bedtime.

3. The following morning he attended a graduation ceremony at the Military Academy. No further programme was announced and the evening's banquet was cancelled. The following night we fell in as Qaddafi's guests at the old Royal Palace on the outskirts of Baghdad and were greeted with the news that our

J.P. Tripp, Esq.,  
Near Eastern Department,  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office,  
London, S.W.1.

F. Clay 15/6. <sup>/host</sup>  
 Mr. Walker Pan number rock fish  
 Mr. Hope Jones <sup>any</sup> the pike!  
 NED (Mr. Mahind)  
 Mr. Burke <sup>any</sup>  
 K 15/6

## LAST PAPER

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host had gone away and might not put in an appearance (nor did he). It then transpired - to the astonishment, not least, of my Jordanian colleague - that he had gone to Jordan the previous day with Generals Ammash and Tikriti to visit Iraqi troops at the front. The D.G. of Protocol at the Palace declared that he had come back the same evening but gone off again. The D.G. of Protocol at the Ministry declared that he had not come back. The harrassed Director of Diplomatic Missions visibly entertained the hope that he would not come back at all. The sparse turn-out of Ministers and diplomats, assisted by their drivers, the Police band and a hundred or more peasants from the neighbourhood, ate up the banquet and dispersed. In point of fact the sympathies of the Corps were for once with Protocol Department, despite the number who had been misled into reporting at the Palace for dinner on the wrong night or attending the Graduation twelve hours late, or been overlooked entirely since their telephones were, as often, out of order.

4. Qaddafi and his entourage returned from Jordan, after taking in a visit to King Hussain and his troops, late the following afternoon. Early next morning he was despatched to Basra, whose Governor (according to the Pakistani Ambassador who happened to be dining with him at the time) was only informed of this arrangement at 11 p.m. and had some difficulty in running up the necessary calicots overnight and assembling a modest rentacrowd reception. To the latter Qaddafi directed, with apparent reluctance, the only public address of his whole visit (during which he complimented the Iraqis, rather oddly, on having repelled the Mongol invasion), after which he was given a trip up the river on a steamer and flown home again via the Shu'aiba Air Force station. In the evening he appears to have been palmed off on a visiting delegation from the Algerian National Liberation Movement, which happened to be in town; and at 11 a.m. on 4 June he was seen off to Damascus.

5. Apart from banner coverage of his arrival and departure, the local press - perhaps as baffled as the rest of us - gave his visit the bare minimum of attention. In the Diplomatic Corps, some expressed the view that, if this was Qaddafi's idea of a serious visit, he really must be off his rocker; others suspected that the Iraqis were paying him out for his initial discourtesy. A third view, which I tend to support, is that,

/whatever

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whatever his or their original intentions may have been, his hosts decided early on to cut their losses and concentrate on one objective, namely to disabuse Qaddafi of any suspicion that Iraq should be included amongst the Arab countries whom Nasser, in Khartoum, had described as guilty of complacency over the battle for Palestine. Hence the apparently unpremeditated excursion to the Eastern Command and the aimlessness of the rest of the programme. It may be of course that Qaddafi, for security or other reasons, simply likes to keep his movements unpredictable.

6. Whatever the explanation, there seems to have been little room in the programme for serious discussion with the top Iraqi brass (Bakr, Saddam Husain and the R.C.C.) of Qaddafi's "Plan". Nonetheless, it was of course on the nature of this Plan that speculation throughout the visit was focused. Qaddafi had stated before he came that he would not make his Plan public until he had discussed it with his brother Arabs, and he gave even fewer public indications of its contents here than he seems to have done in Khartoum. Indeed, only in a brief statement to the Iraq News Agency did he directly touch upon it in public. "The Libyan Plan", so his statement ran, "seeks to pin down all to either of two choices: war or capitulation. Responsibility is to be determined in this criterion and those failing to honour their commitments should be brought to account". Rumour naturally has been intense. The theories bandied about here include, for what they are worth, the following:

- (a) That, as reports from Khartoum and the above quotations suggested, the Plan's central feature is the "Arabisation of the conflict": Do or Die, all together, and keep the Russians and other foreigners out of the ring. The Lebanese Ambassador has been embellishing this version with the story (since published, he tells me, in the Beirut press) that Qaddafi has refused a Soviet request for an air and naval base in Libya.
- (b) That his Plan centres on securing agreement to a Palestinian State on the West Bank and calling it a day.
- (c) That he believes success to lie in the severance of all relations with the U.S. if Nasser's May Day appeal to President Nixon is unheeded, in the positive exploitation of oil as a political instrument, and in the nationalisation of American oil interests. The last of these is widely believed to have been discussed

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here in respect of the IPC; but in view of Libya's own dependence on U.S. oil concessions, it seems barely conceivable that Qaddafi would advance it as a general proposition. Perhaps the subject arose on the initiative of the Iraqis, who are known to be currently interested in the idea as far as the IPC is concerned and may have sought to tie Qaddafi down to underwriting the financial risk of going ahead with it. (They may well not realise that straight confiscation of the American holding would, so Duroc Danner tells me, be physically impossible.) The fact that it was his Minister of Economy who came with him may be relevant.

7. None of these suggestions would amount to anything like a plan, save perhaps (b) - and as the idea of peace based on a West Bank State of Palestine runs counter to declared Iraqi policy, Qaddafi would not have found much of a welcome for such a proposal here. Perhaps Iraq's conclusions about the visit are best summed up in the oracular sentence attributed by the Baghdad Observer to Tikriti when addressing the crowd at Basra on the subject. "If anything", he is quoted rather quaintly as saying, "If anything, it indicates the revolutionary character of fellow revolutionaries in Libya". (He was actually referring to Qaddafi's visit to Iraqi troops in Jordan, but the reference might have extended to the whole five days.)

8. As for Qaddafi himself, the general Iraqi opinion seems to have been that despite his upstanding figure, glistening teeth and penetrating eyes, he is distinctly too young to be the Head of even the youngest revolutionary State. Brigadier Hassan Neguib (the "hero of the Eastern Front", who was recently recalled from commanding the Salahuddin Force and who was sent with Qaddafi on the excursion to Jordan) said to me at a dinner party the evening he returned, "Qaddafi? Totally without experience. And anyway, he's just a Signals Officer". The Algerian Ambassador's reaction to Qaddafi's performance was to beg his West European colleagues not to report it to their governments for fear the latter might think all Arab Presidents equally erratic.

9. These unfavourable judgements may all prove wrong - though Donald Maitland's telegram No. 817 of 21 May gives little

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/encouragement

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encouragement. Meanwhile, the promised Joint Communiqué on the visit, which ended two days ago, is still awaited.

*Yours ever*

*H.G.*

(H.G. Balfour Paul)

P.S. Since this letter was drafted Cairo telegram No. 674 casts, I see, further doubts on the seriousness of Qaddafi's Plan.

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Official Visits Between Iraq And Libya; Reference To The Pursuit Of Agreement On A Unified Arab Information Policy. Political Relations Between Iraq And Libya. 15 Jan. 1970. MS Middle East Online: Iraq, 1914-1974: Selected files from series AIR, CAB, CO, FCO, FO, PREM, T, WO, The National Archives, Kew, UK FCO 39/631. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Archives Unbound, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107455552/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=f174d20c&pg=1](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107455552/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=f174d20c&pg=1). Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.